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ABSTRACT

The value of a rally, or scavenger hunt, in providing opportunities for second language learning is described. Teams are made up of people who do not speak the same native language. The players then begin the hunt that is designed as a noncompetitive creative language practice through participation exercise. Past experience indicates that the hunt provides an opportunity for everyone to use the second language for creative, practical ends while students develop personal associations outside their own language group. The materials for the game are detailed and some sample clues provided. Participants must supply the answers from their own knowledge or frame suitable questions to passers by. The rally or hunt offers a wide variety of possibilities for practical and creative language practice. The packet of problems used in a rally in Spain designed to teach Spanish is appended. (RW)

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Using the Rally for Language Stimulation

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Using the Rally for Language Stimulation

As one of the culminating projects of an intensive course in Spanish language and culture, held in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, during the summer of 1982, the students participated in a very active language learning game that uses a methodology resembling what is known in the United States as a scavenger hunt and in Germany as a rally.[1] The student participants, from many countries and at all proficiency levels, agreed that the project was interesting and rewarding, not only because everyone got a chance to use the target language (L_2) for creative, practical ends (communicating with each other and outsiders in order to complete a series of exercises), but also because the students were able to develop personal associations outside their own language (L_1) group. They also appreciated the fact that the instructor was absent during the project, thereby allowing them to help each other in a less threatening atmosphere.

Briefly, the games goes like this: The organizers divide the students into conveniently sized teams of three to five people

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[1] The organizers of the Spanish rally were Horst Kreuter, Hans Krug, and Susanne Biedenkopf--all from West Germany. My thanks to them for assistance in the preparation of this paper.

who are not speakers of the same L_1 (at least as much as possible). Each team is then given a series of sequentially numbered, sealed envelopes containing various exercises to be completed; some of the envelopes contain only numbered blank sheets, however, for a purpose described later. The team members are then sent off with directions given in the L_2 on how to proceed, along with one major observation: Under no circumstances is the game to become a competitive time race between teams; it should be a cooperative effort among team members and resolved without time constraints. The goal of the project is useful, creative language practice through participation, not a frantic race around the campus, the town, a shopping mall, or the neighborhood. The organizers of the rally, therefore, must find ways to make sure everyone arrives within a reasonable time at the designated rendezvous point. (You could tell the teams, for example, that if they are not done by a certain time they should call a certain telephone number so they can get instructions on how to get to the rendezvous point.)

The materials for the game are inexpensive; each team uses an identical set of items: fifteen (more or less) consecutively numbered letter-size envelopes, each containing either a sheet of problems to be solved, or a blank sheet of the same size. Once the appropriate sheet is inserted in a correspondingly numbered envelope the envelope is sealed. The devising and organizing of these materials does in fact constitute the most effort on the part of the organizers of the game, but once the work has been done it can be perfected where necessary and reused in the future.

The game begins when each team is sent off to a convenient but different site where it can choose its first leader, who opens Envelope 1 and then helps his or her team figure out the questions and answers, or how to resolve the problems presented. The problems are not the ordinary sort of requirements of a scavenger hunt, however. You will want to construct your own to fit your own locality, but here by way of example are the instructions (translated from Spanish) in the first envelope we received (see the Appendix for the complete packet of problems and solutions):

1. Answer the following questions.
2. Rearrange the circled letters to form a number.
3. This number refers you to the next envelope.

Here were the questions:

A. A common musical instrument in Northwest Spain: G A I T Ⓐ
B. A bullfight: Ⓒ O R R I D A
C. What is very rare in the city of Santiago: S Ⓠ L
D. The author of Don Quixote: Ⓒ E R V A N T E S
E. A volcano in Mexico: C I T L A L T Ⓔ P E T L
F. A brand name of a Spanish car: S E A Ⓣ
G. The name of a man who runs a popular cafe in University Plaza: V I T O Ⓡ I A N O

Participants must supply the answers from their immediate knowledge or go out and frame suitable questions to passersby. They may have to locate specific places called for in the questions, or find an

atlas that lists volcanoes. In any event, the team stays together and works creatively, sharing the questions as much as possible. Once the answers are correct, the circled letters (ACOCETR) can then be rearranged to form CATORCE (fourteen), which is the next envelope the group is to open.

The responsibility for opening Envelope 14 then passes to a new leader, who must then "direct the traffic" called for inside. (If this shift of power does not occur, the more aggressive or proficient members of the team tend to take over and exclude the more silent or less proficient ones.) When the correct second envelope is opened a note at the top of the page should indicate that the envelope should be opened immediately after No. 1; if this sequence is not the one followed then there is an error and the directions and answers of Envelope 1 should be rechecked until they lead to the correct envelope in the sequence. (When the packet of envelopes is made up, several of them--perhaps as many as half--should contain sheets of paper with no instructions other than that the team has made an error and should go back and recheck the answers to the problems in the previous envelope.)

The next envelope could contain another sequence like that found in Envelope 1:

A. Locate the office of <u>The Voice</u> (a newspaper).

B. Across the street from the office of <u>The Voice</u> there is a building whose name recalls a famous movie starring Humphrey Bogart [<u>Casa Blanca</u>]. What is the number of the building? [No. 54]

C. Now write the sum of the two numbers from the address and you will have the number of the next envelope. [Clearly the group now goes on to Envelope 9.]

And so it goes until the final envelope containing problems is opened and the team is directed to a location where everyone can rendezvous and compare notes on where they went wrong or where they had humorous events of one kind or another.

You may wish to consider one or more of the following variations in the construction of your version of the game:

1. Use one, two, or more superior students to help you devise the questions and put the entire project together. This frees the instructor from some of the work and gives the students even more practice.

2. Have a native L_2 speaker make a test run of the project, with an eye out for discovering vague questions, ambiguities, or errors.

3. In addition to the question sequences such as are given above, you might require on one or more of the instruction sheets that the team interact more closely with an audience than merely obtaining single answers. That is, a team could go through a shopping mall and attempt to locate someone who would teach them a nursery rhyme or a few lines of a song. Each team could then recite the rhyme or sing the song for the others once they are all back together.

4. You may want to schedule a midgame stop for the teams just so you can check their progress. In one of the envelopes

given to our team we were directed to a particular city fountain where we were treated to refreshments before being given the instructions that would lead us to the next envelope.

Clearly, then, the rally offers an endless variety of possibilities for practical and creative language practice, and like other good games of this type, it can be improved or easily modified as it is used.

Appendix

This appendix contains the packet of problems used in the rally detailed in the first paragraph of this essay. They are included here to provide the reader with other types of problems that were (and can be) incorporated into the game. The reader should note that Envelopes No. 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 19, and 20 were the only ones that contained problems; the sheets in Envelopes No. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 13, 16, 17, and 18 were blank except for the following notation at the top of the page: "This is Envelope No. ___. You have made an error. Return to the directions in the previously opened envelope and recheck the answers to the problems." The problem sheets have been ordered in their "discovery sequence" to allow the reader to follow them more easily.

The reader of this appendix will also note a number of problems the rally participants were expected to solve even though the problems did not lead to the next envelope. The problems were there simply to extend the experiences of the participants.

Envelope No. 1

1. Answer the questions below.
2. Rearrange the circled letters to form a number.
3. This number refers you to the next envelope.

A. A common musical instrument in Northwest Spain: _ _ _ _Ⓞ [gaita]

B. A bullfight: Ⓒ_ _ _ _ _ _ [corrida]

C. What is very rare in the city of Santiago: _Ⓞ_ [sol]

D. The author of Don Quixote: Ⓒ_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ [Cervantes]

E. A volcano in Mexico: _ _ _ _ _ _ _Ⓒ_ _ _ _ [Citlaltepetl]

F. A brand name of a Spanish car: _ _ _Ⓒ [Seat]

G. The name of a man who runs a popular cafe in University Plaza:
_ _ _ _Ⓡ_ _ _ _ [Vitoriano]

[When the questions are answered correctly, the circled letters (ACOCETR) can be rearranged to spell CATORCE (fourteen); the team should then move on to Envelope 14.]

[8]

Envelope No. 14 (This envelope should be opened after No. 1. If this sequence is not correct, return to the previously opened envelope and recheck the answers to the problems.)

A. Locate the office of The Voice (a newspaper).

B. Across the street from the office of The Voice there is a building whose name recalls a famous movie starring Humphrey Bogart. What is the number of the building?

[The building, Casa Blanca, is number 34.]

C. Now write the sum of the two numbers from the address and you will have the number of the next envelope.

[The group then goes on to Envelope No. 7.]

Envelope No. 7 (This envelope should be opened after No. 14. If this sequence is not correct, return to the previously opened envelope and recheck the answers to the problems.)

A. In the plaza named for the author who wrote Don Quixote, look for the initials of an explosive French actress. What is her name?

[A large sign for the Bank of Bilbao boasts "BB"--hence, Brigitte Bardot.]

B. In this same plaza there is also the popular symbol of the feminists. Near the symbol you will find the number of the next envelope.

[The number 15 appears near the ♀ symbol, so the group goes on to Envelope No. 15.]

Envelope No. 15 (This envelope should be opened after No. 7. If this sequence is not correct, return to the previously opened envelope and recheck the answers to the problems.)

A. Go to the plaza in front of the Cathedral. Find someone who will help you write down a short poem in Spanish (at least five lines).

B. Now, directly across the plaza from the row of national flags there is a semicircle of statues. How many statues are there?

[There are 11.]

C. The number of statues indicates the number of the next envelope.

[11]

Envelope No. 11 (This envelope should be opened after No. 15. If this sequence is not correct, return to the previously opened envelope and recheck the answers to the problems.)

A. Go to the Fountain of the Silvershops and find someone who will teach you a short song in Spanish.

B. Now go to the small plaza in front of the building where the Parliament of Galicia meets. At the fountain, sing the song you just learned.

[When the participants came to the fountain and sang their song they were rewarded with refreshments and then given the number of the next envelope to open: No. 19.]

[12]

Envelope No. 19 (This envelope should be opened after No. 11. If this sequence is not correct, return to the previously opened envelope and recheck the answers to the problem.)

A. There is a small block of houses between Franco Street, Toral Square, and Villar Street. Go there.

B. Add up all the numbers of the houses in this small block. HINT: the sum of the numbers is 7??. [The number is 730.]

C. Now, add the three numbers and the result is the number of the next envelope. [No. 10]

Envelope No. 10 (This envelope should be opened after No. 19. If this sequence is not correct, return to the previously opened envelope and recheck the answers to the problems.)

A. What years are Holy Years in Santiago de Compostela during the 20th century? [A Holy Year is declared when St. James' Day falls on a Sunday. The years are 1909, 1915, 1920, 1926, 1937, 1943, 1948, 1954, 1965, 1971, 1976, 1982, 1993, and 1999.]

B. Now find a public photo booth and take a picture of your group.

C. Go to the Alameda [the city park]. Count the number of corners on the bandstand. The answer is the number of the next envelope. [No. 8]

[14]

Envelope No. 8 (This envelope should be opened after No. 10. If this sequence is not correct, return to the previously opened envelope and recheck the answers to the problem.)

A. How many regions are there in Spain? And what are their names?

[There are 14: Galicia, Asturias, Castile-Leon, Castile-La Mancha, Basque Provinces, Navarre, Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, Murcia, Andalucia, Extremadura, Balearic Islands, and Canary Islands.]

B. Near the bandstand in the Alameda there are some receptacles that people use for discarded trash. What is the name for one of these? HINT: P _ _ _ _ _ _ _. [papelera]

C. How many vertical bars of metal painted green and white does each of these receptacles have? The answer is the number of the next envelope. [20]

[15]

Envelope No. 20 (This envelope should be opened after No. 8. If this sequence is not correct, return to the previously opened envelope and recheck the answers to the problem.)

A. Go the the Derby Café and order two portions of churros. Count them before you eat them. The number is _____. [12]

B. In Cardinal Payá Street there is a small clock store. What is the number of the store? [No. 12] Now go to the envelope with that number.

[16]

Envelope No. 12 (This envelope should be opened after No. 20. If this sequence is not correct, return to the previously opened envelope and recheck the answers to the problem.)

A. Call the following number on the telephone: 58-60-70. When someone answers, tell that person the name of the street in Santiago where the red-light district is located.

B. Then ask the person on the telephone where the group should go to celebrate the end of the game.

C. Go there.

[17]